

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1861

To highlight and promote freedom of the press worldwide.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 1, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself and Mr. PENCE) introduced the following bill; which
was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To highlight and promote freedom of the press worldwide.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Daniel Pearl Freedom
5 of the Press Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Acts of violence against journalists and
9 media personnel continue to rise in frequency, with
10 very few of the attacks resulting in prosecution.

11 (2) According to the 2008 Annual Report by
12 the Committee to Protect Journalists, in 2008 at

1 least 41 journalists were killed in connection with
2 their work, and 125 were imprisoned.

3 (3) Reflecting the rise in influence of Internet
4 reporting, an increasing number of online editors,
5 bloggers, and web-based reporters are being impris-
6 oned and websites are being closed because of offi-
7 cial censorship.

8 (4) The United States and the international
9 community agree that the safety and independence
10 of journalists and the media are a matter of pressing
11 international concern. On December 10, 1948, the
12 United Nations General Assembly adopted the Uni-
13 versal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 of
14 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states
15 that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion
16 and expression; this right includes freedom to hold
17 opinions without interference and to seek, receive
18 and impart information and ideas through any
19 media and regardless of frontiers.”.

20 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

21 (1) highlight and promote the work and accom-
22 plishments of journalists and media organizations
23 that promote freedom of opinion and expression
24 worldwide;

1 (2) draw attention to the conditions in coun-
2 tries in which journalists are killed, imprisoned, kid-
3 napped, threatened, or censored;

4 (3) offer protection for these individuals and
5 media organizations by identifying to the inter-
6 national community those countries where journal-
7 ists are at the highest risk; and

8 (4) emphasize the significance of including free-
9 dom of the press as enshrined in article 19 of the
10 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a factor
11 in United States foreign policy.

12 **SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE PROMOTION OF FREE-**
13 **DOM OF THE PRESS WORLDWIDE.**

14 (a) REPORT.—The Secretary of State shall annually
15 submit to Congress a report regarding the promotion of
16 freedom of the press worldwide. The report shall be enti-
17 tled the “Annual Report on the Status of Freedom of the
18 Press Worldwide”.

19 (b) PREPARATION.—The Secretary shall prepare the
20 Annual Report with the assistance of the Bureau of De-
21 mocracy, Human Rights and Labor.

22 (c) CONTENTS.—The Annual Report shall contain
23 the following information:

24 (1) A description of the status of freedom of
25 the press in each country, including initiatives in

1 favor of freedom of the press and efforts to improve
2 or preserve, as appropriate, the independence of the
3 media, together with an assessment of progress
4 made as a result of those efforts.

5 (2) An identification of countries in which there
6 were violations of freedom of the press, including di-
7 rect physical attacks, imprisonment, indirect sources
8 of pressure, and censorship by governments, mili-
9 tary, intelligence, or police forces, criminal groups,
10 or armed extremist or rebel groups.

11 (3) In countries where there are particularly se-
12 vere violations of freedom of the press, the annual
13 report shall address the following:

14 (A) Whether government authorities of
15 each such country participate in, facilitate, or
16 condone such violations of the freedom of the
17 press.

18 (B) What steps the government of each
19 such country has taken to preserve the safety
20 and independence of the media, and to ensure
21 the prosecution of those individuals who attack
22 or murder journalists.

23 (d) ORGANIZATION.—The Annual Report shall be or-
24 ganized in three parts, as follows:

1 (1) Part I shall consist of the identification of
2 countries (and the associated assessment of their ef-
3 forts) under subsection (c)(1).

4 (2) Part II shall consist of the identification of
5 countries (and the associated assessment of their ef-
6 forts) under subsection (c)(2).

7 (3) Part III shall consist of the identification of
8 countries (and the associated assessment of their ef-
9 forts) under subsection (c)(3).

10 (e) TIME FOR SUBMISSION.—The Secretary shall
11 submit the Annual Report on May 3 of each year, declared
12 by the United Nations General Assembly as World Press
13 Freedom Day, or the first day thereafter on which either
14 House of Congress is in session.

15 (f) UNCLASSIFIED FORM.—The Annual Report shall
16 be submitted in unclassified form.

17 **SEC. 4. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS GRANT PROGRAM.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall ad-
19 minister a grant program with the aim of promoting free-
20 dom of the press worldwide. The grant program shall be
21 administered by the Department of State’s Bureau of De-
22 mocracy, Human Rights and Labor as part of the Human
23 Rights Democracy Fund (HRDF).

24 (b) AMOUNTS AND TIME.—Grants may be awarded
25 to nonprofit and international organizations in amounts

1 ranging from \$70,000 to \$150,000 annually. Grants may
2 span multiple years, up to five years.

3 (c) PURPOSE.—Grant proposals should promote and
4 broaden press freedoms by strengthening the independ-
5 ence of journalists and media organizations, promoting a
6 legal framework for freedom of the press, or through pro-
7 viding regionally and culturally relevant training and
8 professionalization of skills to meet international stand-
9 ards in both traditional and digital media.

10 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
12 retary of State \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2010
13 to 2014 to carry out this Act.

14 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act:

16 (1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The term “Annual Re-
17 port” means the Annual Report on the Status of
18 Freedom of the Press Worldwide required under
19 subsection (a).

20 (2) MEDIA ORGANIZATION.—The term “media
21 organization” means a group or organization that
22 gathers and disseminates news and information to
23 the public (through any medium of mass commu-
24 nication) in a foreign country in which the group or
25 organization is located, except that the term does

1 not include a group or organization that is primarily
2 an agency or instrumentality of the government of
3 such foreign country. The term includes an indi-
4 vidual who is an agent or employee of such group or
5 organization who acts within the scope of such agen-
6 cy or employment.

7 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
8 the Secretary of State.

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